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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**HEALTH ADVISORY:  
LOCAL FLU ACTIVITY INCREASING - FLU SHOTS ENCOURAGED**

Eau Claire, WI –January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014–The Eau Claire City-County Health Department encourages local residents to protect themselves and family members by getting a flu shot now. Reports of laboratory confirmed influenza have been increasing statewide and locally.

At this time, the predominant strain circulating is the influenza A strain H1N1. This strain is included in the current flu shot. The H1N1 virus, which emerged in 2009, caused more illness in children and young adults than in older adults, though serious illness was seen in all age groups. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, everyone age six months and older should be vaccinated – it is not too late.

“Flu vaccine is safe, effective and your best protection against the flu and the complications that it can cause, such as pneumonia,” said Lieske Giese, Eau Claire City-County Health Department Director/Health Officer. “Getting your flu shot each year and making sure your children are vaccinated can help protect relatives and friends of all ages. Even though it is January, it is not too late to get a flu shot. We don’t want you to get sick, and we don’t want you to risk getting others sick.”

Flu shots are available at many clinics and pharmacies throughout the community. For a list of the clinic dates and times at the Eau Claire City-County Health Department, see [www.echealthdepartment.org](http://www.echealthdepartment.org) or call the Flu Line at 715-839-6061. For information about where to find other providers/locations within the community giving flu shots, call 2-1-1.

Health officials also have these reminders:

- Influenza is a respiratory illness. Signs and symptoms include cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, chills, and fatigue. A fever, diarrhea, and vomiting may or may not accompany the other symptoms.
- You need a flu shot each year. A flu shot from a previous flu season does not provide protection this flu season.
- In addition to getting a flu shot, you can protect yourself by washing your hands frequently, getting plenty of sleep, eating healthy, and avoiding others who are ill.

- To protect others if you are ill, cover your coughs and sneezes, wash hands frequently, and stay home until 24 hours after your fever is gone.
- Medication does exist that can lessen the symptoms of influenza. If you suspect that you have influenza and are in a high-risk group, contact your healthcare provider. High-risk individuals include children age 2 and younger, adults age 65 and older, pregnant women, and persons with long-term chronic conditions.
- Although flu shots are not 100% effective, you are much less likely to have severe symptoms or complications if you should get the flu.

For more information on influenza, see [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

For more information, contact your health care provider or the Health Department at 715-839-4718.

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